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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 003155

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: TAMOGAMI REPURCUSSIONS CONTINUE

REF: A. TOKYO 3069
[1](#)B. TOKYO 3085
[1](#)C. TOKYO 3142

Classified By: AMBASSADOR J. THOMAS SCHIEFFER, REASONS 1.4(B)
AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ousted Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) Chief Toshio Tamogami has continued to make headlines, most recently in Diet testimony where he refused to apologize for his revisionist historical views published in an essay and resulting in his removal as ASDF chief (ref A). Prime Minister Aso strongly criticized Tamogami's remarks and called for re-education of SDF personnel, but asserted that Tamogami's firing was prima facie evidence of solid civilian control. Some senior Japanese leaders assert that Tamogami's calls for Constitutional revision and a greater role for the SDF were not incorrect. Fallout from the frenzy surrounding Tamogami could lead to removal of additional senior MOD officials, possibly including the Defense Minister.

Unrepentant, but Perhaps Not the Only One

[1](#)2. (SBU) Called as an unsworn witness to testify before the opposition-controlled Upper House Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on November 11, ousted ASDF chief Tamogami complained about his dismissal from office and called for Constitutional revision during a nearly three-hour session. In addition, Tamogami refused to retract statements in his essay claiming Japan was not an aggressor nation during World War II (ref A) and accused the Japanese government of "trying to control free speech." Since his October 31 dismissal, Tamogami has remained unrepentant, saying that his essay identified Japan as a "good country" and seeing no harm in his portrayal of Japan as a victim in the war.

[1](#)3. (SBU) As noted ref B, Tamogami was not the only ASDF participant in the essay contest. Media are reporting that the number of submissions by ASDF officers was 94, not the originally estimated 50, and allege that these submissions were orchestrated by Tamogami. Senior MOD officials have told the press that they believe the contest was "fixed" given that 40 percent of the contributions came from one source, the ASDF, and the head of that source, Tamogami, won the contest.

Wrong, But on All Counts?

14. (C) Tamogami's unapologetic revisionism has created a media frenzy. Both domestic and international press gave broad coverage to his sacking as well as his comments in the Upper House. In spite of broad condemnation of Tamogami's remarks, some Japanese contacts say that Tamogami also made a number of "good points." While noting that it was right for Tamogami to step down for making the statements that he did while in his official position, Diet Lower House member Takeo Hiranuma recently told Embassy Tokyo that the Constitution should be revised, as Tamogami asserted in his essay and testimony. This revision is necessary, Hiranuma noted, so Japan could take part in collective self-defense.

PM's Viewpoint

15. (SBU) In the Upper House Foreign Affairs Committee's November 13 session, PM Aso criticized Tamogami's remarks both in his essay and his testimony as "extremely inappropriate," and noted that while freedom of speech exists in Japan, the publication of the personal views of an official of such senior rank was unacceptable. Aso admitted that Tamogami's revisionist leanings had been "overlooked for years," but denied that there was a systemic problem within MOD, noting "civilian control worked perfectly. This is why Tamogami was dismissed."

16. (C) Aso further vowed to "re-educate" Self-Defense Forces personnel to ensure there would be no recurrence of a similar situation. He said the Japanese government would review new ways to supervise SDF members and check the content of any opinions expressed externally. Aso may also need to focus on the most basic levels of military education in Japan. Japanese media on November 11 carried a story alleging that a mandatory textbook at the National Defense Academy (NDA) contained references to World War II as "warfare based on self-defense." Senior NDA officials have countered that the textbook in no way glorifies war.

More Heads to Roll?

17. (C) While the intense media coverage in the days immediately following Tamogami's dismissal and his Diet testimony early this week have died down somewhat, MOD contacts say that further casualties of Tamogami's indiscretions may be coming. A senior Japanese Defense official told a member of DAO Tokyo that due to the "unstable political situation," in order to move things along with respect to the OEF Refueling Bill, there is a "50/50 probability" that Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada may be fired or resign next week. The defense official speculated that "perhaps a deal was cut" between the parties. Embassy Tokyo has not received independent corroboration of this assertion, but it is true the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has agreed to move the OEF bill forward in the Upper House to enable passage by November 20 (ref C).

Comment

18. (C) DPJ lawmakers and the media are questioning whether there is, in fact, sufficient civilian control of the Self-Defense Forces. The DPJ smells blood and may look at giving in on the refueling bill as fair trade for the opportunity to focus Diet debate on the government's failure to rein in SDF senior officers' advocacy of what is an unpopular and extreme view of Japanese history. The opposition may also push for changes at MOD including, but possibly not limited to, the removal of DefMin Hamada. Senior MOD officials stress that the SDF have worked hard over decades to build up their reputation (ref B). Tamogami's remarks, will not undermine the Alliance or the ability of the SDF to perform their duties, but they will add to the negative political situation that increasingly hobbles

the Aso administration's ability to govern effectively.

SCHIEFFER